

Remarks

In the present response, seven claims (1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, and 18) are amended. Claims 1-20 are presented for examination.

I. Claims Rejections: 35 USC § 112

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 USC § 112 as failing to provide antecedent basis for “the port connector apparatus” in line 2 of claim 3. Applicants respectfully traverse.

First, Applicants note that line 2 of claim 3 does not even recite “the port connector apparatus.” Second, line 3 of claim 3 recites “a retractable, extendible port connector apparatus.” Thus, claim 3 provides antecedent basis for the limitation “the port connector apparatus” at it appears in claim 3 and other dependent claims.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC § 112 as failing to provide antecedent basis for “the port connector apparatus” in lines 3 and 4 of claim 4. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Line 3 of claim 3 recites “a retractable, extendible port connector apparatus.” Thus, claim 3 provides antecedent basis for the limitation “the port connector apparatus” appearing in claim 4 which depends from claim 3.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

II. Claims Rejections: 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-8, and 11-20 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 6,033,240 (Goff) in view of USPN 6,093,038 (Chen). Applicants respectfully traverse.

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art cited must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. *See* M.P.E.P. § 2143. Applicants assert that the rejection does not satisfy these criteria. Without conceding whether the first and second criteria have been met,

Applicants discuss the third criterion to demonstrate that a prima facie case of obviousness does not exist.

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 1 recites a multiple-connector apparatus that is movable to an extended position so multiple connectors are accessible outside of the computer system for simultaneously connecting plural peripheral devices.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Chen merely shows a connector board 10 that “has pivot portions 102 for rotating the board relatively to the case 20 of the notebook computer” (see Fig. 2 of Chen and col. 2, lines 23-30).

For at least these reasons, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 3

Claim 3 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 3 recites a port connector “having a plurality of port connectors arranged in a plane substantially parallel to the top side and adapted to receive plural mating connectors in a direction substantially parallel to the sidewall when in an extended position.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Fig. 2 in Chen shows a connector board 10, but this board is not “a retractable, extendible port connector” having the recitations of claim 3.

For at least these reasons, independent claim 3 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 5

Claim 5 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 5 recites a changing means that “moves to an extended position outwardly from the housing for simultaneously connecting to plural

peripheral devices.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Fig. 2 in Chen shows a connector board 10, but this board does not “move back and forth through an aperture” or “move to an extended position outwardly from the housing for simultaneously connecting to plural peripheral devices.”

For at least these reasons, independent claim 5 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 7

Claim 7 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 7 recites a connector tray “having a plurality of port connectors that simultaneously connect plural peripheral devices when the connector tray is in an extended position.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Fig. 2 in Chen shows a connector board 10, but this board does not have an “extended position” as recited in claim 7.

For at least these reasons, independent claim 7 is allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 8

Claim 8 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 8 recites a connector tray having first and second portions with a plurality of port connectors disposed in the second portion. Claim 8 then recites that the first and second portions “extend to an extended position at which the second portion can pivot relative to the first portion.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Fig. 2 in Chen shows a connector board 10, but this board does not have first and second portions that “extend to an extended position at which the second portion can pivot relative to the first portion.”

For at least these reasons, independent claim 8 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 11

Claim 11 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 11 recites a multi-connector tray “having plural connectors in the second portion inaccessible in the retracted position.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector tray. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Fig. 2 in Chen shows a connector board 10, but this board does not have “plural connectors in the second portion inaccessible in the retracted position.”

For at least these reasons, independent claim 11 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

Claim 14

Claim 14 recites numerous recitations that are not taught or suggested in Goff in view of Chen. By way example, claim 14 recites a multiple-connector apparatus that “extends through the aperture to expose multiple connectors for simultaneously connecting plural peripheral devices.” Goff does not teach or even suggest a multiple-connector apparatus. The Office Action agrees stating that Goff “is silent as to a multi-connector apparatus” (see OA at p. 3). Chen merely shows a connector board 10 that “has pivot portions 102 for rotating the board relatively to the case 20 of the notebook computer” (see Fig. 2 of Chen and col. 2, lines 23-30).

For at least these reasons, independent claim 14 and its dependent claims are allowable over Goff in view of Chen.

III. Claims Rejections: 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 2 and 9 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 6,033,240 (Goff) in view of USPN 6,093,038 (Chen) and USPN 5,971,777 (Garside). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 2 depends from independent claim 1, and claim 9 depends from independent claim 8. Garside fails to cure the deficiencies of Goff and Chen. For at least the reasons given with independent claims 1 and 8, respective dependent claims 2 and 9 are allowable.

IV. Claims Rejections: 35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 6,033,240 (Goff) in view of USPN 6,093,038 (Chen) and USPN 6,848,943 (Machado). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 10 depends from independent claim 8. Machado fails to cure the deficiencies of Goff and Chen. For at least the reasons given with independent claim 8, dependent claim 10 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Any inquiry regarding this Amendment and Response should be directed to Philip S. Lyren at Telephone No. 832-236-5529. In addition, all correspondence should continue to be directed to the following address:

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Respectfully submitted,

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